

USU Brigade changes hands, not direction

*By Tech. Sgt. Andre Nicholson
University Affairs*

The change of command is an old military tradition which allows the incoming commander to assess the readiness and discipline of the unit at his first formation, and it also serves as a definite point in time, when responsibility for the command is passed from the outgoing commander to the incoming commander.

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) exercised that tradition last

Wednesday as Col. Charles S. Serio, Ph.D., MSC, U.S. Army, relinquished command to Capt. John R. Rumbaugh, CFAAMA, MSC, U.S. Navy.

Colonel Serio served as the fourth brigade commander for eight years after being selected in 1997 by retired Navy Vice Admiral James A. Zimble, M.D.

“People ask me, how was I able to stay here for eight years? It’s because of luck and the surgeon general lost track of me,” Colonel Serio said jokingly, as he looked at Lt. Gen. Kevin C. Kiley, M.D., Commanding General, U.S. Army Medical Command and U.S. Army Surgeon General.



Photo by HM1 Jason Wright

Master Chief Petty Officer Kevin P. Smith, SW/FMF, USU Brigade Senior Enlisted Leader (left) prepares for the passing of the colors as Col. Charles S. Serio, Ph.D., MSC, U.S. Army, relinquishes command to Capt. John R. Rumbaugh, CFAAMA, MSC, U.S. Navy, during the USU Brigade Change of Command ceremony held last Wednesday. Charles L. Rice, MD, university president (far right), was the reviewing officer for the ceremony.

On a more serious side, Colonel Serio was visibly moved by the ceremony, which involved four formations of students, staff, and faculty, the presentation of colors by the USU Tri-Service Color Guard, and the singing of the National Anthem by Capt. Timothy Gerlach, USU Brigade Adjutant.

A unique part of the ceremony was the arrival of the official party by the playing of Bos'n pipes, the sounding of four bells, and the announcement that the official party (Charles L. Rice, MD, USU president, Colonel Serio, and Captain Rumbaugh) were now onboard by Navy Cmdr. Marvin Jones, MSC, CFAAMA, Navy company commander, who served as the master of ceremony.

Colonel Serio had many people to thank for supporting him throughout the years and summed it all up by saying, "Thank you for taking care of this soldier and you will always be in my thoughts."

Captain Rumbaugh, a native of western Pennsylvania, is the first Navy officer to command the USU Brigade and now serves as the senior military officer of the university. He has the responsibility for command of more than 1,000 members of the brigade representing all four uniformed services and he's the senior military advisor to the university president.

The incoming commander emphasized that he believes the brigade should function as a team and he will work to enhance the focus of "One Brigade, One Team, One Mission."

Shortly after the change of command ceremony, the brigade held a retirement ceremony in honor of Colonel Serio's 36 years of service to the U.S. Army and the country, and to also honor the support of his family throughout his career.



The Change of Command

Captain Rumbaugh prepares for the announcement of his arrival at the USU Brigade Change of Command ceremony last Wednesday where he assumed command of the brigade.

Photo by JO3 Kory Kepner

USU students, staff, and faculty march in before the start of the brigade change of command ceremony.

Photo by JO3 Kory Kepner





Colonel Serio (left) and Captain Rumbaugh, conduct an inspection of the troops, which serve as the final passage for the outgoing commander as he views and inspects the troops for the last time. Additionally, it's an opportunity for the incoming commander to view and inspect his troops for the first time.

Photo by TSgt. James Steele

The Retirement

Colonel Serio receives a hearty congratulations and job well done from Lt. Gen. Kevin C. Kiley, M.D., Commanding General, U.S. Army Medical Command and U.S. Army Surgeon General during the colonel's retirement ceremony held after the change of command.

Photo by Tom Balfour



Colonel Serio and his wife Belva, depart after the reading of "The Watch," which symbolizes the commander is relieved of his duty and the watch stands relieved by those he led, guided, and trained.

Photo by Tom Balfour